

Burnham-on-Crouch
Urban District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR

1920.

THOMAS D. WHITE,

Medical Officer of Health.

MALDON:

Richard Poole, 37 High Street.



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Burnham-on-Crouch Urban District Council.

REPORT

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Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR 1920.

To the Burnham-on-Crouch Urban Sanitary Authority.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present to you my Report for the year 1920.

The total number of births for 1920 is 70 (34 males, 36 females) as against 60 for the preceding year. The total number of deaths is 40 (21 males, 19 females) as against 43 for 1919. Included in the 70 births are 2 illegitimate cases.

I append a table of causes of death and vital statistics.

Causes of death in Burnham-on-Crouch Urban District, 1920.—Civilians only.

Causes of Death.				Males	Females
ALL CAUSES.				21	19
1	Pulmonary Tuberculosis	..	..		1
2	Other Tuberculous Diseases	..	..		1
3	Cancer, Malignant Disease	..	..	2	2
4	Meningitis .. ..	..	..		1
5	Organic Heart Disease ...	..	..	1	2
6	Bronchitis .. ..	..	..	1	1
7	Pneumonia (all forms) ...	..	..	1	1
8	Other Respiratory Diseases	..	..	1	
9	Nephritis and Bright's Disease	..	..	1	1
10	Congenital Debility, &c.	..	..	4	2
11	Violence, apart from Suicide	..	..	2	
12	Other defined Diseases ..	..	..	8	6
13	Causes ill-defined or unknown		..		1
Deaths of infants under 1 year of age				5	2
Total illegitimate				1	
TOTAL BIRTHS				34	36
Legitimate				33	35
Illegitimate				1	1
POPULATION (for Births and Deaths)				3150	

Net Death Rate 12·6

Birth Rate 22·2

Pulmonary Tuberculosis Death Rate .. 3

The Death Rate for England and Wales is 12·4

The Birth ,, ,, 25·4

Of the 40 deaths which took place during the year :-

7	took place under 1 year
2	„ 1 year and under 5
1	„ 5 years and under 25
2	„ 25 years and under 45
5	„ 45 years and under 65
23	„ over 65 years
—	
40	
—	

It should be noted that the causes of death in 6 of the 7 cases under 1 year were attributed to premature birth and congenital weakness.

From a comparatively incomplete return, I gather that one still birth took place in the town.

Natural and Social Conditions of the District.

The population at the 1911 census was 3190. At the present time the population as computed by the Registrar General is 3150. The area of Burnham is 4517 acres, exclusive of the area covered by water. The number of inhabited houses is 892. Physically the district is flat, and in a large part marshy and is sparsely wooded. Bounded on the S. and S.E. by the River Crouch, that part which adjoins the river practically throughout its whole extent, and for a considerable distance inland, lies below the level of high water mark, and is protected from the salt water by artificially-constructed sea-walls. The soil consists of gravel and sand overlying London clay.

The chief occupations of the inhabitants are oyster dredging and work connected with yachting. Several boat-building yards and an iron foundry also employ a considerable number of workers, while those workers in the out-lying parts are engaged in agriculture.

The climate is bracing and dry, and the prevailing wind is W.S.W.

The following are the figures for the rainfall for the last three years, for which I am indebted to Mr. E. Dilliway, the Clerk to the Council :—

	1918	1919	1920
January ...	3·04	2·77	2·19
February ...	·61	2·70	·34
March ...	·71	2·35	·67
April ...	2·03	2·77	2·95
May ...	1·12	·32	·77
June ...	1·00	1·06	·85
July ...	4·04	1·97	4·32
August ...	1·32	2·22	1·17
September ...	3·61	1·03	5·56
October ...	1·89	·80	1·02
November ...	1·78	2·44	·55
December ...	1·63	3·17	2·74
	—	—	—
	22·78	23·60	23·13
	—	—	—

The rivers and streams of the district are:—(1) The river Crouch, tidal salt water, running along the southern boundary of district. (2) The Brook, a small stream running across the district in an easterly direction, and emptying into the river at the “Pile House.”

The river receives a certain amount of pollution from yachts but no harm appears to result.

Sanitary Circumstances of the District.

WATER. The town is supplied with water by public service, the waterworks being situate on high ground near the church. There are two sources of supply:—(1) A surface supply drawn from tube-wells of depths varying from 10—30ft. (2) A deep supply from a bored well some 400ft. Both waters are wholesome in character, and the supply, though intermittent, is abundant, as a rule some 1,400,000 gallons being pumped per month. An occasional breakdown in the machinery causes annoyance, but is easily rectified. The quality is tested by analysis at least yearly.

SEWERAGE. Sewage is treated by means of coke-breeze bacteria beds. These continue to work well and give a very satisfactory effluent. Their capacity is, however, by no means too great, even under normal circumstances. The effluent after leaving the works enters the river at the sluice, being largely diluted before doing so, and enters in a satisfactory state.

It is contemplated in the near future to lay down a new sewerage system for the whole town, in which practically every house will be linked up; indeed this system would have been completed by now if it had not been for the late war. The sewage disposal works will then necessarily be reconstructed and materially enlarged.

CESSPOOLS. There are several in the town; they are satisfactory and are fairly regularly emptied. They will nearly all be joined up under the new scheme.

CLOSETS. There are 500 water closets with flushing cisterns and 180 without. There are also some 42 pail closets, which are emptied once or twice weekly, the contents being removed to land away from the town. A very desirable improvement in the method of dealing with these closets would be the substitution of a clean empty pail for the one removed, so that pails and contents could be removed entire and the pails thoroughly cleansed ready to replace the ones next removed. This would entail the provision of a duplicate set of pails, but the gain, from a sanitary point of view, would more than compensate for their cost.

Scavenging is done by contract, the dustbins being emptied weekly.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE DISTRICT. The particulars under this heading will be found included in the Report of the Sanitary Inspector at the end of this book.

SCHOOLS. There are two Public Elementary Schools. The sanitary conditions of both are satisfactory. The water supply to both schools is adequate. In cases of infectious disease, the rooms in which such cases have been detected are sprayed with formaldehyde solution, together with their occupants. All suspicious cases and contacts have been kept from school, and as far as possible, under observation. The medical inspection of school children is in the hands of a Medical Inspector appointed by the County Council. The M.O.H. also makes frequent visits to the schools as required.

Both the schools were closed under my instructions in May on account of the prevalence of measles. The summer holidays were also put forward one week on account of the prevalence of whooping cough.

Food.

MILK SUPPLY. The supply is sufficient for all needs. The milk is of very good quality and supplied locally. There are five milk-sellers in the town. The milk is at times examined with the above result. There are about 150 milch cows in the district; there are also five cowsheds which are carefully inspected four times each year; they are kept clean and satisfactory with plenty of water laid on, and no case of disease has been traced to the use of milk in the town.

MILK.—MOTHERS' AND CHILDREN'S ORDER. The local authority acted under this Order and supplied the needs of the applicants.

ALL OTHER FOODS were inspected from time to time with good results. Bake-houses are inspected and always found in a satisfactory condition.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSES. The slaughter-houses, four in number, have been frequently inspected and are kept in a proper condition. No specially qualified inspector is appointed for inspection of MEAT. No action has been taken under the Sale of Food and Drugs or other Act. All the slaughter-houses are well supplied with water,

There is no public abattoir in the district and when meat is inspected at the time of slaughter the visiting officer attends at the slaughter-house. No carcasses were condemned for tuberculosis.

Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Diseases.

The town has been very free from notifiable infectious diseases during the year. The numbers notified have been as follows :—

Scarlet Fever	...	...	2
Tuberculosis	...	...	3
Malaria (contracted abroad)	...	...	2
Diphtheria	...	...	6
Poliomyelitis	...	...	2
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	...	...	1

Of the 6 cases of diphtheria notified, 5 took place in 1 house, and the origin I was not able to trace.

No vaccinations have been performed by the M.O.H. under the Public Health Regulations, 1917.

DIPHTHERIA. The M.O.H. always keeps a supply of diphtheria anti-toxin ready at hand, which is provided by the Sanitary Authority for the use of the doctors. Bacteriological aids are given also, and the houses and the schools of the patients are visited by the M.O.H. for the discovery of contacts, who are then isolated as much as possible, and disinfected as well as the homes and schools.

TUBERCULOSIS. The doctors here carefully notify all cases and patients attend the Chelmsford clinic.

In cases of doubtful diagnosis, the help of the tuberculosis officer is always sought. Extra nourishment is ordered when required. There is one shelter in use in the town and is under the supervision of the M.O.H.

VENEREAL DISEASE. It is very difficult to form an opinion as to the number of cases here, but I am of opinion that they are very few—in fact next to none!

Maternity and Child Welfare.

The Health Visitor is the Parish Nurse, who works under my supervision and reports to me weekly. I report to you half-yearly on her work, which she carries out most satisfactorily (the scheme has the approval of the County M.O.H.) She makes from 15 to 25 visits weekly in this respect, and offers her services to many who decline them. The nurse also attends at her house daily for an hour to give advice to expectant and nursing mothers. Few, however, take advantage of her services in this respect.

There are no mid-wives in the town.

Illegitimate children are specially looked after by the nurse.

One case of ophthalmia neonatorum has been notified during the last year. It was a very slight case involving one eye only.

Sanitary Administration.

The staff consists of the Medical Officer, the Sanitary Inspector, who is also the Surveyor, and an odd man when required.

The hospital accommodation for infectious cases is situated in Maldon Road, and is capable of receiving 20 patients. The hospital has not been opened since March, 1912. The M.O.H. administers it, and the local doctors treat their own cases there.

No Adoptive Acts—and the only Bye-laws are those framed in 1899 for building purposes.

The several doctors send their bacteriological specimens to the County Offices at the expense of the local authority. In the event of small pox appearing in the town, the arrangements we have made are to have the patient at once removed to a tent to be erected on the marshes.

Housing.

GENERAL HOUSING CONDITIONS IN THE DISTRICT.

There are about 884 houses inhabited in the district, of which some 650 are what can be described as working-class houses. During the last five years not more than 10 houses have been erected in the district. It is probable that some 50 houses are required, and in order to meet this deficiency the Council have a housing scheme in hand to provide 30—the erection of 20 houses is now proceeding on a site already purchased by the Council. Six have already been completed and are occupied.

OVERCROWDING. In my opinion there is none, in fact the number of occupants per house works out at rather less than 3·5.

FITNESS OF HOUSES. The general condition is very fair indeed, what few there are below the general standard are being gradually improved.

UNHEALTHY AREAS. None.

APPENDICES.

STATISTICS FOR THE 12 MONTHS ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1920. Number of dwelling houses in respect of which complaints were made that they are unfit for human habitation : None.

ACTION UNDER SECTION 28 OF THE HOUSING ACT, 1919.

(a) Number of orders for repairs issued: 12; (b) number of cases in which repairs carried out by the local authority: 0; (c) number of dwelling houses voluntarily closed on notice by owner that they could not be made fit without reconstruction: 0.

CLOSING ORDERS. (a) Number of representations made to the local authority with a view to the making of closing orders: 0; (b) number of closing orders made: 0; (c) number of dwelling houses in regard to which closing orders were determined on the houses being made fit for human habitation: 0.

DEMOLITION ORDERS. None.

OBSTRUCTIVE BUILDINGS. None.

No offensive trades exist in the town. The factories and workshops are periodically visited and always found in a satisfactory condition.

RAT DESTRUCTION. Good progress was made during the year in getting rid of these pests. The poison used was "Rat-Quit," which can be purchased in the town and is harmless as far as chickens and domestic animals are concerned. In many cases, however, the rats returned, the people appeared to get disheartened and took very little further trouble about them. The law however says that the occupiers of houses infested shall do their best to rid themselves of the pests and I recommend a rigorous carrying-out of the provisions of the recent Act dealing with the question and calling the attention of the residents to their duties and liabilities under the Act. Many houses are, I am told, still over run.

I append a statement of work done by the Sanitary Inspector, to whom my thanks are due for the support given me.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

THOMAS D. WHITE,

Medical Officer of Health.

SUMMARY OF WORK done through the Sanitary Inspector in
the Urban Sanitary District of Burnham-on-Crouch, during the
year ending December 31st, 1920.

	Total No. for Year.
1 Complaints received	—
2 Nuisances detected without complaint ..	5
3 Nuisances abated	5
4 Nuisances remaining unabated	—
5 Formal Notices served	1
6 Summonses taken out	—
7 Convictions obtained	—
8 Lodging-houses inspected	—
9 Slaughter-houses inspected	4 quarterly
10 Bakehouses inspected	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ -yearly
11 Dairies and Milk Shops inspected	5 quarterly
12 Cowsheds inspected	5 quarterly
13 No. of samples of milk taken for examination for cleanliness, etc.	—
14 Filthy Houses cleansed, Sec. 46, P.H. Act, 1875	—
15 Houses disinfected	8
16 Cases of overcrowding abated	—
17 Houses erected or re-built for which Water “Certificates” were applied	8
18 “Certificates” granted	8
19 „ „ deferred	—
20 Public Wells, total No. in District	—
21 New Public Wells sunk or improved supplies of water afforded	—
22 Wells cleansed or repaired	—
23 Wells closed	—
24 Privies. No. in district	1
25 „ „ No. abolished during the year	—
26 Pail Closets. No. in District	42
27 Water Closets. No. in District without flushing cisterns	145
28 Water Closets. with flushing cisterns	600
29 Privies and W.C.’s repaired; W.C.’s supplied with water	20
30 Water cisterns cleansed, repaired, or covered ..	—
31 Animals improperly kept removed	—
32 Samples of water taken for analysis	4
33 Compensation paid for destruction of infected bedding	—
34 Seizures of unsound meat, &c.	—

(Signed) J. COOK,
Sanitary Inspector.

